

ELEMENTS IN MOVIE TRAILERS THAT MOTIVATES AUDIENCE TO WATCH MOVIES IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT-- *Marketing is one of the main drivers of the performance of a movie and positively influences box-office success even if the product is poor. Thus, filmmakers increasingly depend on movie trailers as an advertising platform. But what is the essential element that makes a good movie trailer? This paper has analysed the elements embedded in a movie trailer that has motivated Malaysian audiences to watch a movie. Qualitative research methods were used and 15 informants from different backgrounds were interviewed in a face to face session. The data were then transcribed and the result was transformed into a conceptual framework. Eight elements (Cinematography, Audio, Colour, Storylines, Genre, Picture, Director, and Actor) were mentioned by the informants. These findings will be able to assist filmmakers and film distributors in Malaysia to emphasize on specific movie trailer elements before planning the promotional campaigns of their movie.*

Keywords-- *Movie Trailers, Movie, Malaysia, Qualitative, Marketing*

I. INTRODUCTION

Movie trailers are strings of scenes or sections of a film formed in a short duration. A movie trailer acts as a means of captivating audiences. It's one of the strongest attractions in terms of promoting the film industry right now. The ability to predict the entire population's response to a target audience for a new movie or TV series, before its launch, is crucial to the film industry. A good movie trailer will help to trigger potential audiences' desire to watch a movie and they will eventually look forward to the release date of said movie. A group of researchers has done their research on human brain responses upon watching movie trailers. Their research has touched on the audiences' expectations when they are viewing a movie trailer and how their brains respond to it in return (Christoforou Papadopoulos, Constantinidou, and Theodorou, 2017)

They conducted a study on a group of people, where they are watching selected movie trailers and observing the film market performance. Watching a movie trailer can affect the audience. An interesting trailer can leave a deep impression in an audience's memory and therefore can stimulate the audience's brain to give them a sense of curiosity towards the upcoming movie. But what does it mean by a good movie trailer? What elements should exist in the movie trailer according to the audience's perspective? This paper has explored the elements of movie

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trailers that attracted audiences to watch movies in Malaysia. The subjects of this study were Malaysian citizens who watched movies based on their trailers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Barnett, White and Cerf (2016), in short, movie trailers can stimulate audiences to watch movies and this includes existent factors in movie trailers such as music, cinematographic style, story comprehension, narrative, dynamic dynamics, popular actors, elements of harmony, and together with artistic novelty which are more challenging to determine but may eventually offer greater predictive power concerning neural and commercial outcomes. Their research paper has studied elements of movie trailers that can help increase ticket sales. Movie trailers are known to be one of the biggest promotional tools in the film industry. The success of the ticket sale for a movie depends on the acceptance of its movie trailer among the public audience. 55.9% of the subjects mentioned that they chose based on whether or not the movie trailer was interesting to make a choice on which movie to watch, while 44.1% of other subjects make decisions based on trailers and some other things like reviews, ratings and so on. This shows that movie trailers have a stronger effect on selling a movie than anything else. Despite the small percentage of differences, movie trailers are still the main reason for this study subjects to choose which movie to watch - 33 out of 59 people have chosen movie trailer as a contributing factor that piques their interest in an upcoming movie.

From their research, they determined that for a movie trailer to be well received, it must have several aspects such as the trailer presentation should be easy for the audience to understand, have catchy music and so on. Researchers can see that each element needs to be taken into account when preparing the trailer. With these elements in place, the trailer will be able to motivate people to watch a movie. Lopera (2014) claims that millennials group are amongst the audience that goes to the movie most frequently. Lopera studies have uncovered why young people are interested in watching movies after checking out their trailers. Two important roles that can be seen from his research are that the trailer can appeal to this group because of the emotional and cinematic values that are present in the trailer. Lopera has created two groups for interview and observation. Participants were required to watch five trailers and from there Lopera conducted his study. Millennials have their own opinions about the trailers they have watched. Group 1 discussed aspects of storytelling, emotional/intellectual elements, and music in the trailers. Out of the five trailers that they watched, they remembered the details for four trailers. They did not care for the music in two of the trailers, and for the other two trailers, the participants liked the music they listened to in those trailers. Trailers that don't reveal too much about the movie storyline are better according to group 1. Two of the participants are more interested in the production, producer, and director rather than the cinematic value of a movie. The remaining 4 participants agreed that both cinematic values and music played an important role in the trailer. More than half of the participants agreed that they would have liked to see the movie when the trailer revealed some clue about the movie storylines. However, the cliché or predictable storyline was not favored by all participants in group 1.

For group 2, the participants remember three out of five trailers. Two of the three trailers are remembered for their music while the other trailer has music that doesn't appeal to them. Group 2 talks more about cinematic value than group 1. Music plays an important role in attracting the audience. Good music can help the movie trailers to

generate curiosity and make the potential audience want to watch the movie. Music also plays a role in presenting the genre of the film. But according to the participants, music for the comedy genre, it is not as important as it does not touch the mood of the audience. Ultimately they don't care much about the genre. In the Lopera study, their survey results showed that 56% of informants were more interested in storytelling in the trailer, 17% were interested in actors or publishers, 15% leans towards the cinematographic, 0.07% are attracted to the action or effects and only 0.05% put importance on music. So from this point of view, it appears that the storyline is important to captivate the audience. The conclusion for the Lopera study is that the most crucial element in a trailer is the method of storytelling, music and cinematographic value. These are some of the most important elements in ensuring that a trailer is able to attract audiences. The researchers also agreed with the element that Lopera mentioned in his study. The storyline is important even though it is not directly related to the fact that there are still some scenes left to keep the audience wondering.

Suliza (2019) also studies music in the trailer. According to her, music is an important element in order to be able to promote a movie through its trailers. But more than just music, the harmony of music with movies, storylines and genres should be emphasized. With the suitable use of music, movie trailers can motivate a person's mood and can motivate audiences to the stage where they want to go to watch a movie. According to the study, the success of a trailer is not based on the implementation of the general audience's favorite artist or song. But the music used must match closely to the message that the trailer wants to convey. She noted that the trailer is the biggest contributor to attracting audiences. The creepy sound effects attract audiences to watch horror movies, as well as other film genres. A production should know which music is appropriate for a trailer that will connect the audience to their movie. Thus, the music element is very important in a trailer. Yanagisawa, Iida, Amasaka (2014) have also studied movie trailers and how to create movie trailers that can increase audience numbers. Amongst the things that were touched on were the variety of variables in the elements of the movie trailer. These elements include ratings, videos, stories, auteur/creators, assignments/roles, narratives, and soundtracks. From their research, placing a nerve-wracking scene from the beginning to the end of a 2-minute video can draw audiences in as opposed to the trailer with no scenes. Increasing scenes with connected storylines are also very important in line with other elements.

Although their research focuses on film marketing, trailers are an important issue in their research. Because a trailer is known to be a major promotional tool for movies regardless of its genre. For their research, one of the key elements of a trailer mentioned is that the storyline or scene that is laid out must have a relationship between its scenes so that the audience can understand its continuity. From these two studies, the researcher can deduct that elements such as the music and the storyline and the cinematic value should be incorporated into the trailer. While there are silent films without much dialogue like *A Quiet Place* (2018) where the background music plays an important role in creating the suspenseful air and invoking fear. According to Hart (2013) website, which also discusses the storytelling elements needed in a movie trailer. There are nine things that the article mentioned, such as a trailer that has to start quickly and end with something big, a mini-movie needs to invoke feeling, trailers should enable audience to think outside the box, consists of three-act-structure, set an effective scene, to find and determine the best moments for each trailer, choose good roads, make bad movies look good, and sometimes the first version is the best.

A good trailer can deliver its promise. The storyline for trailers is just as important as the full-length movie storyline. Without a storyline, the trailer will be disastrous and will make audiences lose their curiosity. Johnston, Vollans, and Greene (2016) have also done studies of trailers that do not always meet the expectation of its movie, sometimes what is included in the trailer is not in the movie. From their previous studies, trailers were said to be overstating, misrepresenting and noisy (Green, Johnston and Bollans, 2013). They have argued that movie trailers are still one of the most important components of contemporary media and its practical use. Their research has more purpose than the usual measure of success, instead, they focus on the audience environment, their reactions and discuss whether or not the movie trailers are seen in a negative or positive light. Their research revealed that the audience had various reactions to the trailer, but did not want to isolate responses from other factors such as media comments, industry activities, cultural understanding or receiving their information from other sources. But their focus remains on how respondents remember, discuss and debate the trailer viewing experience. The response of 280 respondents consisted of 32% cast, 25% narrative, 23% aesthetic, 16% music, dialogue, voice-over, 14% comedy, 13% action, special effects, 8.5% sequel, 8.5% character, 7.5% director, 7.5% editing, 7% genres, 6% remember because they didn't like it, and the others.

There are many things that audiences value when watching trailer movies. 82.96% of respondents said they were disappointed after watching the movie because they had imagined how great the movie was through the trailer. But their hopes were not met, the movie was not as great as the trailer. Although their respondents found that the trailer had some errors that made them uncomfortable when they saw the movie, they were still interested in the trailer. The trailer is still exciting, entertaining, exciting, mysterious, smart, and eye-catching. There are even able to tease the respondents' emotions and invoke affective reactions depending on how deeply the film touches the audience. The studies mentioned under the subheading of this literature review have the necessary elements needed in a trailer to be able to attract the audiences. But this study wants to see if these elements are similar to the movie trailer elements that attract audiences to watch movies in Malaysia. Therefore, from these previous studies mentioned, several elements can be seen. To make it easier to see which element is touched, a template has been provided. There are six elements that this study find often mentioned in previous literatures.

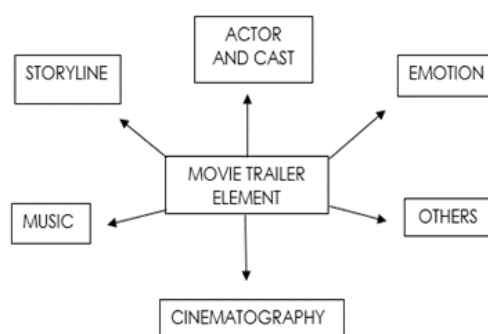


Figure 1 : Elements in a movie trailer from literatures

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using a qualitative research design using in-depth interviews. These interviews do not have a tight focus group, and the interview questions are also not structured. According to Jasmi (2012), in addition to being able to obtain more detailed answers, in-depth interviews also have unique characteristics which include conducting interviews with few informants. The researcher can provide detailed reasons based on the informants' answers. These interviews also allow researchers to observe for a long time. The informants of this study were Malaysians who were purposively selected to interview about their experiences in watching trailers and movies. The informants should be the one who watches the based on the trailer. The following is a list of the names and occupations of the informants interviewed. A total of 15 people were interviewed. Data were then transcribed verbatim and framed into a Conceptual Framework.

Table 1: Informants Data

INFORMANT	NAME	OCCUPATION SECTOR/STATUS
1	Mohd Amirul Zafran	Private
2	Adli Arif Rizuan	Private
3	Nurain Najwa	Student
4	Nor Afiqah Hamidon	Private
5	Ain Afifah	Student
6	Muhammad Ferdaus	Student
7	Maznor Hafeyzhe	Student
8	Siti Nur Azliena	Private
9	Farisha Nazira	Private
10	Siti Suriyati	Government
11	Anum Soleha	Government
12	Ahmad Hisbullah Affan	Private
13	Intan Dayana	Student
14	Nur Hafizah	Private
15	Mohd Imran	Student

IV. RESULTS

This study found that there are eight trailer elements that motivate audiences to watch movies in Malaysia. These include elements of genres, storylines, colors, cinematographers, audio, actors, directors and pictures. These are some of the elements that audiences have mentioned when asked 'Why did you watch the movie after seeing the trailer?'. The informants are motivated by the elements that appear in the movie trailer. Therefore, this study will describe the breakdown of the data obtained based on these elements. Ten from fifteen said that the genre was one of the elements in the movie trailer that influence the audiences. According to the informant 3, genres are a

priority in a trailer that comes before watching a full movie. This is because the genre in the trailer should serve to capture the attention of the audience. From Ain Afifah, she also looks at the genre that been shown. For example, Pusaka is a horror genre, and it is shown in the trailer, which makes her want to know what the ending is and make her want to watch it in cinema (personal communication, 17 January 2020). According to her, as a subjective genre presented in the trailer, it can generate interest for the audience. This is because every audience has her own taste and choice of genre in watching a movie. Furthermore, according to informant 6, the selection of this genre is not always an option for informants.

However, according to informants, it depends on what movie you want to watch. And of course, the trailer of the movie needs to present a clear genre to the audience to attract the rest of the audience. Informant 6 also stated that among the genre selections of interest are action and comedy genres. Based on the trailer featured informants will also select the genre of interest before choosing to continue watching the movie. Similarly to informants 7 and 9, the genre is one of the highlights of the trailer. Many trailers reflect the genre in the movie. This is because, for informants 7 and 9 it is the genre, their preference in a particular genre is essential for watching movies. However, five of informants did not identify the genre as a priority. For informants 1, 2, 11, 13 and 15, the genre is not their top pick in watching a trailer. Sometimes, the genres featured in the trailer do not reach the informants. However, in terms of the genre elements in the movie trailer shows that ten of the informants agree that the genre is the main attraction and can motivate audiences to watch a movie.

‘As I want to know a little bit about the storyline, and I want to know if it interesting or not and also I will look on the newspaper or social media review from netizen whether the storyline are interesting or not. And if the trailer interesting then I will watch the movie’ (Nurain Najwa, personal communication, 17 January 2020).

Furthermore, this study found that among the eight elements listed, the highest percentage shown is the storyline in the trailer. Thirteen from fifteen informant said the storyline was the most important element of a trailer. According to informant 1, the storyline is a short synopsis that will attract audiences to watch a movie. According to informant 3, 7 and 11, the storyline is a series of scenes where the audience will be drawn to the trailer since based on these series of scenes there will be various questions arises that will only be answered when they go to the movies. According to these three informants, the action or climax needs to be set up so that it will invoke the audiences’ curiosity and excitement to see the action or the climax for a while longer. Majority said they were interested in the storyline featured in the movie trailer. However, only two out of informants, stated that the storyline in the trailer did not make any sense, because there are some scenes in the movie trailers that do not include in the movie later on. It also stated that the trailer was trying to deceive the audience by putting a missing piece in the story. According to the informants, this was a disappointment when they go watch the movie and hence classified that the storyline featured in the trailer as not a priority for the informant. Next, the data obtained from informants on the motivates of trailers on color elements in movie trailers is of particular interest to several types of movies. This is evident from the data obtained in which only four of the informant mentioned that the color element was a very important aspect of the movie trailer because color plays a very important role in attracting audiences visually. According to informant 6, for animated movies, the role of color is very important in attracting audiences. The colors that are always used by animators are bright and cheerful. Informant 6 also stated that the color in the trailer was very effective in capturing the audience's attention. Through the combination of storytelling and genre presented in the trailer, color also plays a part in attracting attention. For example, a horror movie trailer

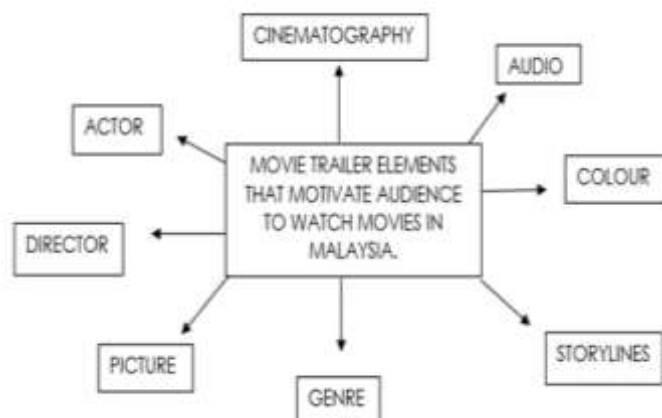
with a dark and gloomy mix of colors is sure to catch the attention of audiences. However, eleven of the informants did not express the importance of color in the movie trailer. According to the informants, color is not the right choice for a necessary element included in a trailer. For them, color does not play a central role in attracting audiences. Therefore, overall, only four people agree that color plays a significant role in some movies, such as animated or horror movies.

In addition to genres, storylines and color elements that have a way to attract a particular trailer to the audience, the cinematography in a trailer is also a concern. This can be seen based on the data collected from the interviews in this study. Only informant 1 have mentioned about cinematography as an attractive element in watching a movie. According to this informant, the portrayal of cinematography in a trailer was a priority for this respondent to watch the movie. However, 97% said the cinematography is not as important when watching a movie trailer. Similarly, the next element that captivates the viewer is the audio element. According to informants 3, 6 and 10, they state that audio plays a part in a movie trailer that is showing the full-length movie appeal to the audience. As a result of the data collection, seven of the informants confesses that audio motivates them when watching the movie, particularly when they listen to it in the trailer. According to 15 of the informants, movies such as action ones need to ensure that the audio becomes the main attraction to their audience by using sound effects that are appropriate to the movie being shown. However, eight of informants do not mention audio is of any importance as the audio for most of the movie trailers is just plain sounds and does not attract the audiences. Compare to audio and storytelling, storytelling is seen as a priority for audiences to garner their interest in the movie. The result of collecting data on the elements that can motivate the audience to watch a movie trailer is the director and the audience. This is a combination of two elements, which the director puts as a stronghold of a particular movie. According to informants 1, 2, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, they will watch a trailer according to the identity of its director. If the movie is directed by a favorite director, the informants will then follow the progress of the movie produced by the director.

‘As for me I will look on the director. Example the director of famous movie will be make me want to watch the movie. Usually the trailer will include ‘From the director of Conjuring and Annabella...’ which will intrigued me to watch the movie in cinema’ (Nur Hafizah, personal communication, 23 January 2020).

Furthermore, informant 5, 6 7, and 8 did not comment on the director of a movie but emphasized the actors that appear in the movie trailer as an attraction to Malaysian audiences. Thus, the overall data obtained by data from six informants shows that the director is not the main reason for watching a movie trailer. However, nine informants said that the director's interest in producing a movie could, in turn, becomes the movie strength and therefore captivate the audience. Similarly, informants 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 informed those who follow the news of a particular actor will only watch movies that have their favorite actors. If you look at all the respondents above, they are interested in watching the movie based on the trailer they are currently viewing. This means that a trailer in a movie is very important as a part of the marketing strategy as well as attracting potential audiences. However, according to both informants 12 and 15, the cast is the right choice in influencing the audience to watch a movie. Additionally, the informants stated that each audience has its own favorite actor. Therefore, it is not surprising that the movie with a favorite cast of the general public will be able to attract the audiences. Not only that, the production has to play an important role in the selection of the cast to ensure that the movie is being well received.

However, according to informants 9, 10 and 11, the cast is not a complete attraction. Because it is possible that there is a portrayal they are not able to play the movie. So, the attraction in watching informants, every hopes for a movie acted. Therefore, based on says, the appearance of not the main target of



of a favorite actor, but the character well in actors are not a real trailers. According to viewer has high by a Malaysian actor. what the informant their favorite actor is watching the movie.

As a result of the data obtained from the informants, the comparison between both the director and the actor elements became the focal point for the audience. This is due to the trailer, which puts the actors in the spotlight, which has indirectly motivated the audience to watch the movie. Based on the above data, eight of the informants were attracted to the trailer when they see their favorite cast starred in the movie, while seven informants said that the cast in the trailer did not attract respondents. The last element is the pictures. According to informants 5 and 7, the pictures shown in the trailer show that the trailer is could be an interesting one because it captures the feeling of wanting to watch the movie. However, the other thirteen informants did not say that the element of pictures was a strong motivates in motivating them to watch a movie. The trailer of the movie aired is a compelling factor set for the purpose of captivating the potential movie audience. Thus, the overall result of the interviews obtained in this study found that the motivates of the storyline elements were the main focus of the audience compared to the element of pictures that appears in the trailer.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is clear from the research conducted that some elements can entice audiences to go to the movies. However, the interview is a subjective one, depending on the individual feeling on which element can be a factor in can attracting them to watch a trailer. But this study found that some elements are similar to those mentioned in the previous study. These include music, storytelling, and cinematography. The following is a conceptual movie trailer element that can motivate audiences to watch movies in Malaysia.

Figure 2: Movie Trailer Elements that Motivate Audience to Watch Movies in Malaysia

As can be seen in Figure 2, there are eight elements derived from the interviews conducted which shows two more elements compared to Figure 1, which shows elements of a movie trailer from previous studies. Although some elements are not well-known by the informants it can still be seen as important factors in producing trailers that can draw audiences to the cinema. Directors and actors can attract the audience, especially for those who already have a good impression of the director and the cast in the first place, before watching a movie. When it comes to music, pictures, and storytelling, these three elements help the audiences to identify the genre of a trailer. For example, for the horror genre, the music used is full of suspense and can trigger fear, the images used also have to be in dark color and can incorporate a scary ambiance. The same goes for other genres. So the production needs to select elements that are appropriate in a particular trailer and can captivate audiences without exposing too many movie-going storylines. This study has made it clear that every viewer has different perceptions of what they seek in a movie but their opinions on trailers are the same, it has to be informative and engaging to motivate them to watch the full movie. We would like to thank Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia for their support. This paper was funded by Geran Inisiatif Penyelidikan - RMI File No: 600-IRMI 5/3/GIP (011/2019)5/3 (056/2017) awarded by Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).

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